

Opportunity to Comment on Darby Lumber Lands - Phase 2 Project

The Bitterroot National Forest, Darby/Sula Ranger District, has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for the Darby Lumbers Lands - Phase 2 Project. The project is located on the Darby Ranger District of the Bitterroot National Forest. The project area is located in Rye Creek, Little Sleeping Child Creek, Harlan Creek, Roan Gulch, Burke Gulch, North Fork Rye Creek, and Robbins Gulch drainages in the Sapphire Mountain Range, east of Darby, Montana.

This project was proposed to design and implement a suitable transportation system for long-term land management, improve forest health and reduce potential fire severity; and provide timber products and related jobs. The project proposes changes to access on specific existing roads and trails, storing and decommissioning specific unneeded road and trails, and building two new OHV (<50" in width) connector trails. The project also proposes commercial harvest on about 1,274 acres and non-commercial thinning on about 333 acres of dry pine sites, prescribed burning of the treated units, and construction of system and temporary roads needed to complete activities.

The EA is available on-line at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=49700>. The EA is also available for review at the Darby Ranger Station and Supervisor's Office. Additional information regarding this action can be obtained from Eric Winters, Darby District Ranger at 406-821-4244.

The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and not authorized under the HFRA and is subject to the Project-Level Predecisional Administrative Review Process (36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B).

How to Comment and Timeframe

Specific written comments (§218.2) on the proposed project will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of this notice in the Ravalli Republic. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) about this proposed project or activity during this or another public comment period established by the responsible official will be eligible to file an objection. Other eligibility requirements are defined by 36 CFR 218.25 (a)(3) and include name, postal address, title of the project, and signature or other verification of identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25 (a)(4).

Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2).

Submit comments to the Responsible Official: Eric Winters, District Ranger, Darby/Sula Ranger District, P.O. Box 388, Darby, MT 59829. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00- 4:30, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays (FAX-406-821-4264). Electronic comments must be submitted to comments-northern-bitterroot-darby@fs.fed.us. (Please put "Comments on Darby Lumber Lands - Phase 2 Project" in the subject line) for which you are submitting comments.

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. For objection eligibility, each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments must either sign the comment or verify identity upon request. Names and contact information (including addresses and e-mail addresses) submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

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